

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

my soul. I have no more hunger or appetite for what is good." The first is signed " F. S." ; but, at the end of the second letter, he says : " I do not put my name here, because I know not if I still have a name."

It has frequently been supposed that the author of these two letters was the unhappy man mentioned above ; but an examination of the original manuscript, and a comparison with the authentic text of one of Catherine's own letters, make it quite certain that they were written by Fra Simone da Cortona, in one of that young friar's chronic fits of depression and spiritual misery.¹ Indeed, Catherine's letter to Simone is manifestly in answer to what he had written to Neri. Addressing him as " Dearest son *without a name* in Christ sweet Jesus," she exhorts him to fight, "like a virile knight," against all obstacles and temptations, the battle in which we cannot win the victory " unless the light of most holy faith is in us; and we cannot have this light, unless the earth of all terrene affection is drawn out from the eye of our understanding, and the cloud of self-love is cast away ; for it is that perverse cloud which utterly takes from us every light, spiritually and temporally." She urges him, in all his troubles* to trust in the love of God, who permits these things for love of us—though sometimes we cannot see it. Through lack of light, because self-love has covered up the pupil of the eye of faith, " we believe ourselves to be cast off by God, and, because of this, we come to a confusion of mind, whereby we leave off doing our work, as though we think we are not accepted by God, and we come to weariness, and are insupportable to ourselves." But in the blood of Christ we shall learn that God does not let us be tried beyond our endurance. Let him embrace the Cross, and not abandon his prayers and spiritual exercises, but, without negligence or confusion, serve God and obey the rules of his order, and find the holy desire of the honour of God and the salvation of souls in

¹ They are contained in the MS. of the Biblioteca Comunale of Siena, T. iii. 3, and printed by Grottanelli in the *Lettert dei JucepoR*, 7 and 8.